

taken from us tragically on February 27th, 2015, after over 40 years of dedicated service to our nation's hardworking families.

Mr. Scanlon served as the longtime Political Director for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In this role, he fought to raise the minimum wage, protect Social Security, and add a voice for middle class families in our government and national discussion.

Larry recognized that our country's success is tied to the economic health of the middle class. In this vein, he sought to make this country greater by fighting to give families the fair shot that they deserve at the American dream.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for Larry's contributions as a fighter for the middle class, and my thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

HONORING THE JERICO PROJECT FOR ITS RECEIPT OF THE 2015 INNOVATION IN JUSTICE AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Jericho Project for its receipt of the 2015 Innovations in Justice Award for approaching criminal justice challenges in a new and effective way. The Innovations in Justice Award recipients were selected by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Center for Court Innovation.

The Jericho Project was launched more than a decade ago by the Shelby County Public Defender's Office to better serve people living with serious mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders who have been cycling through the criminal justice system. The main architect, Shelby County Chief Public Defender Stephen Bush, my constituent, developed the initiative while working as an Assistant Public Defender, a position he held for almost 20 years before being appointed as Shelby County's 10th Public Defender in 2010.

Mr. Bush has overseen the development of community linkage plans that are presented to courts in support of community-based, alternative forms of sentencing. Recovery Support Specialists on the team support clients for four months after they are released from prison and help them transition to life back in the community. I am proud to say that nearly 60 percent of those participating in the Jericho Project have successfully completed their recovery plans and have avoided further cycling through the criminal justice system.

What began as a grant-funded experiment has matured into a permanent part of Shelby County's efforts to address the needs of some of its most vulnerable citizens. The Jericho Project's success has made it a national model for how criminal justice systems can better serve those struggling to survive with serious mental illnesses.

The Jericho Project has been changing lives for more than a decade, and this recognition is well deserved. I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Jericho Project for receiving the 2015 Innovations in Justice Award.

AUTHORIZING SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECOUP BONUSES AND AWARDS

SPEECH OF

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 280, legislation authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. I would like to commend Chairman MILLER for his continued leadership on this issue. I also want to express my gratitude to the House Veterans Affairs Committee for their hard work on this bill, and for its work last year on the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

Last year, reports by the VA Office of Inspector General revealed widespread mismanagement, inadequate standards of care, and unnecessary delays for appointments in VA facilities across the country, including facilities in both Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia where veterans in my home district seek care. The appalling lack of responsible oversight at certain facilities led to the placement of veterans on secret waiting lists created to manipulate data in order to cover up long wait times. This was an inexcusable practice that prevented our nation's heroes from receiving the timely care that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, those responsible for overseeing those VA facilities were clearly failing at their jobs. Yet, in Fiscal Year 2013, VA issued over \$380,000 in bonuses to employees at hospitals under investigation by the VA Inspector General for falsifying records. This is unacceptable. Under no circumstances should VA employees receive a 'performance award' for purposefully fostering an environment of negligence. H.R. 280 provides the authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to order VA employees to pay back their bonuses so that no employee will remain rewarded for their misconduct.

We owe our veterans a great debt of gratitude, and one small way of repaying that debt is to ensure that our veterans receive the best possible care. This commonsense legislation will bring much-needed accountability to the VA system and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 280.

COMMENDING LOCAL BROADCASTERS

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, every day, our nation's broadcasters serve communities across the country by providing the news and entertainment we rely on to get through our day. Whether it is an update on what is happening in the world, educational programming, or a review of the movies opening that weekend, most Americans turn to broadcasters for news on issues big and small.

This is especially true for local broadcasters. These broadcasters provide the public with the

news that is most important, and most useful for them, because it is the news from their own communities. This is true in Sacramento and across the nation. Our broadcasters play an integral role in Sacramentans day-to-day lives, informing all of us about everything from local traffic to an in-depth look at local political issues.

Local broadcasters play a particularly important role in times of an emergency. In Sacramento, we continue to experience drought-like weather conditions, as well as heavy rains that bring with them the threat of flooding. Unfortunately, the entire state of California is susceptible to a number of natural disasters, including earthquakes, wildfires, and—of course—flooding. It is essential that residents have access to local emergency broadcasts, so that they have the public safety information they need when a disaster strikes.

And the role of broadcasters goes beyond disseminating information to the public. They have also played an important part in growing and investing in our nation's airwaves. The spectrum sharing agreement that the broadcasters entered into with the Department of Defense helped solidify the Federal Communications Commission's recent record breaking spectrum auction of the AWS-3 band. This spectrum auction generated nearly \$45 billion in revenue, enough to fully fund FirstNet, the nationwide interoperability network for America's first responders and public safety officials.

Broadcasters play an important role in our country. I want to applaud the work of broadcasters, particularly those in Sacramento, for working diligently to cover and provide local news programming to our communities, and for being strong community partners.

RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize International Women's Day. This day is celebrated across the world in different ways to honor the role of women throughout history. Here in the United States, we celebrate this day during Women's History Month. Since 1913, March 8 has been marked as a day to honor the economic, political, and social achievements of women.

International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the steps we have made towards equality in the United States and internationally, and honors the women who worked to make these steps possible. As a Member of Congress from the only state in the country to have had an all-female delegation, I am proud of how far our country has come towards equality for women. But we cannot recognize these accomplishments without also mentioning the work that still needs to be done.

While we have come so far, women still face political and economic obstacles. Women are still not equally represented in small business ownership or in the technology sector. I have been working to build support and encouragement for more women small business leaders and women in technology. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege to congratulate